DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 842 EC 140 356

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TITLE A Study of the Reading Interests and Attitudes of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Gifted Children in the State of Missouri.
PUB DATE Jul 81
NOTE 90p.: Master's Thesis, Southwest Missouri State University.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Gifted: Intermediate Grades; *Reading Attitudes; *Reading Habits; *Reading Interests; *Recreational Reading; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Missouri

ABSTRACT

The study examined the reading interests, attitudes, and habits of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students. The data were gathered from the 69 state assisted gifted programs in Missouri by means of a survey developed by the investigator. The Ss were limited to the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children whose program coordinators participated in the study. The data gatherred from the 19 program respondents were analyzed in terms of means, standard deviations, and cumulative percentages. The analysis of data indicated that gifted children had a highly positive attitude toward reading. The data also revealed that the favorite reading interests of gifted children were comedy, mysteries, adventure, myths and legends, and stories about boys and girls their own age. However, the data compiled on reading habits indicated many differences related to the sex of the reader. Various form letters, the survey, and statistical analyses are appended. (Author)

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A STUDY OF THE READING INTERESTS AND ATTITUDES OF FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADE GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Southwest Missouri State University

In Partial Fullfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education--Reading

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by

Renee Close Goostree

July 1981

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Department of Educational Administration
and Special Programs
Southwest Missouri State University
July 1981
Master of Science in Education--Reading
Renee Close Goostree

A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study was to identify the reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students. The study was further implemented to identify the gifted's attitudes toward reading and their reading habits.

The data were gathered from the 69 state-assisted gifted programs in Missouri by means of a survey developed by the investigator. The subjects were limited to the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children whose program coordinators participated in the study. The data gathered from the 31 respondents were written onto computer sheets and tabulated at the Computer Center at Southwest Missouri State University. Frequency data resulted in terms of means, standard deviations, and cumulative percentages. The analysis of data indicated that gifted children had a highly positive attitude toward reading. The data also revealed that the favorite reading interests of gifted children were comedy, mysteries, adventure, myths and legends, and stories about boys and girls their age. However, the data compiled on reading habits indicated many differences related to the sex of the reader. The conclusion drawn from the study was that reading plays a significant part in the lives of gifted children.

This abstract of about 185 words is approved as to form and content.

Janice R. Phanton
Chairman, Advisory Committee

A STUDY OF THE READING INTERESTS AND ATTITUDES OF FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADE GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

by

Renee Close Goostree

July 1981

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Chapter 1

THE STUDY

It is an interesting fact that reading achievement is recognized as the most generally useful of all academic achievements in predicting later performance (Gold, 1965:82). It is also a fact that forty-three percent of gifted children read before going to school (Freehill, 1961:107) and most are reading one year above grade level by the end of the first grade (Durr, 1964:34). In almost all cases, reading is the favorite pastime of gifted children as well as their best-liked and easiest school subject (Gold, 1965:43). In view of these facts, reading is an important and integral part of the lives of gifted children.

The importance of reading was emphasized by Terman in his study of the gifted. He found that within his group, one-third to one-half of the children had begun to read before entering school. While keeping a two-month reading record for his bright children, Terman discovered a volume of reading more than twice that of a control group (Gold, 1965:43).

In a study by Rice (1970:122), it was shown that interest in reading resulted in a distinct pattern from gifted students down to educable mentally retarded pupils. The more talented the pupil, the more interested he was in reading. Although the relationship between intelligence and

reading interests has not been clearly established; generally, bright children read much more than the average child, have a broader range of reading interests, and are usually a year or two ahead of the average child in interest maturity (Harris and Sipay, 1975:515). Also, Witty and Lehman reported that mentally superior students read qualitatively better material than inferior students (Gray, 1960:1107). In a study of reading interests of gifted children at Hunter College Elementary School, gifted children ten and eleven years of age were found to be avid readers, interested in a great variety of materials, including adult as well as children's literature. A question raised from the study was what part the teachers should take in the guidance of reading for these children (Hildreth, 1970:190).

Again and again writers have referred to the value of ascertaining and utilizing children's interests. Barbe (1965:419) found support in research which provided convincing evidence that the school curriculum should be developed in accord with the children's needs and interests if it is to have maximum significance. Specialists in reading also recommend utilizing children's existing interests as a starting point in learning. Witty (1971:16) believed that reading offers all gifted pupils an avenue by which potentialities may be more fully realized. And Harris and Sipay (1975:511) stated:

> A successful reading program must not only develop children who can read, but also children who do read. Two major objectives of any total reading

> program should be to build a lasting interest in reading and improve reading tastes. A good reading program must create the desire to read and help the individual to find pleasurable recreation in reading. It also should foster the desire to read for personal development, to learn more about the world, and to gain increasing understanding of people and society.

Thus in a properly balanced reading program, the study of children's interests becomes a priamry consideration (Barbe, 1965:420).

Statement of the Problem

Reading seems to play a significant part in the lives of gifted children. Therefore their reading interests should be paramount to the professional educators who work with them. This study consisted of a review of literature on reading interests and attitudes and a survey of the reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children in Missouri. The survey provided data that was used by this investigator to answer the questions:

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

2. Will there be a difference in the order of preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

These broad questions formed the foundation of the study.

Questions to be Answered

In order to address the three main questions, the following eleven implicit questions were formulated:

1. What is the order of preference of gifted children in reading materials? (a) information-scientific, (b) information-historic, (c) information-current, (d) realistic fiction, (e) imaginative fiction, (f) humor, (g) poetry and arts

2. What is the general attitude of gifted children about reading?

3. What is the average amount of time gifted children spend in recreational reading?

4. Will gifted children have a favorite author and look specifically for more of that author's writing?

5. Will gifted children reveal that a book has changed their lives by giving them new ideas or goals?

6. Will gifted children reveal that they have read a book more than one or two times?

7. Will gifted children reveal that reading changes their thinking and actions?

8. Will there be a difference in preferences of reading materials between gifted boys and girls?

9. Which title selections are seriously disliked by gifted children?

10. What are the implications of the study for the teaching of reading and literature to gifted children?

11. What is the influence of intelligence upon reading interests?

Purpose of the Study

Many writers have advocated the study of reading interests to heighten children's satisfaction of reading and improve the total reading program. Yet, the area of gifted children's reading interests has been sadly neglected (Witty, 1971:20).

The purpose of the examiner was to design a study to identify the reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children enrolled in the gifted programs of the state of Missouri. The study was further implemented to determine reading attitudes and the reading habits of these children.

Value of the Study

Unfortunately, little research has been executed to compile the reading interests of gifted children. For decades these children have been overlooked altogether and when recommendations were made for special education programs to satisfy their needs, there was an almost complete disregard for the role of reading (Witty, 1971:20). Therefore, this study is important in that it may provide a springboard for further research and study in the area of gifted children's reading interests. The study may give implications for the teaching of reading and literature to

the gifted. Also, the results of the study may provide valuable to school systems in stocking libraries and planning programs for their gifted children.

Limitations

This study will be limited in the following respects:

1. The study will be limited to gifted children enrolled in the 1980-81 state funded gifted child programs in Missouri.

2. The study will be limited to only fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children.

3. The analysis of data will be limited to the respondents surveyed.

4. The data will be limited to ten respondents in each of the 69 programs surveyed.

5. The data will be limited to the information surveyed by the instrument.

6. The study will be limited to the frequency data compiled from the questionnaire.

7. Results of the survey will be limited to the viewpoint of the respondents.

8. The results will be limited to the percentage of surveys returned.

All generalizations and inferences made from this study will be stated with these limitations in mind. In addition to the limitations, the assumptions must also be considered.

Assumptions

To further clarify the understanding of this study, certain assumptions must be stated. It is assumed that:

1. The instrument created was sufficiently sensitive to what the researcher wanted to know.

2. The answers given by the respondents were honest and true opinions were stated.

3. The information submitted to the researcher was interpreted correctly.

4. The research may be biased in that the reading interest choices were limited. If more choices were available, other results might have been obtained.

Definitions of Terms

To further facilitate the understanding of this study, the following terms have prescribed definitions.

1. Gifted Children: Children who are identified through the use of multiple criteria by professionally qualified persons who are by virtue of outstanding abilities, capable of high performance and meet three of the five set criteria of Missouri's State Code of Regulations for programs for gifted children (1978).

2. Reading Interests: An individual's selection of a preference in reading topics (Harris and Sipay, 1975:512).

3. Reading Attitudes: An individual's views, feelings, values, and beliefs in the area of reading (Ewing, 1977:1).

The Instrument

In order to answer the previous questions posed in this study, it was necessary for the researcher to design a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section was titled Reading Attitudes and consisted of twenty items based on a Likert scale. Ten items of the section were negatively worded to discourage any bias in answering the survey. The second section was titled Reading Experiences and was designed to clarify the reading habits of gifted children. The section consisted of five questions to be answered by yes or no and short written responses. The short written responses were designed into the section to help obtain the true experiences of the respondents. The last section was titled Reading Interests Checklist. The section consisted of thirty-one items of reading interest whose answers would be ranked using a Likert scale to obtain frequency data.

Design of the Study

This study is a review of related literature on the reading interests of gifted children, a survey of those interests, and the implications of those interests found through the survey.

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, questions to be answered, the

value, the limitations and assumptions, definitions of terms, and a discussion of the instrument to be used.

Chapter 2 consists of a review of related literature which is divided into three areas: 1. background of the gifted, 2. reading attitudes, and 3. a review of studies completed on reading interests.

Chapter 3 consists of a detailed description of the procedures used in the study. An introduction, an extended look at the instrument, and a step-by-step explanation of the procedure will be given.

Chapter 4 consists of an analysis of the data received from the instrument to allow the investigator to answer the questions posed. The specific reading interests of gifted children will be identified, along with their attitudes about reading.

Chapter 5 consists of a summary followed by conclusions and recommendations as found in this study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Much of the research in the area of reading and gifted children draws the researcher to one conclusion: reading seems to play a significant part in the lives of gifted children. Therefore, their reading interests should be paramount to the professional educators who are working with them. This study consisted of a review of literature on reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children in Missouri to allow this investigator to answer the questions:

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

2. Will there be a difference in the order of preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

With these three questions directing the path of the study, the researcher read extensively in several areas. First, the background of the gifted and development of educational programs were reviewed in relation to reading. Second, the information and survey instruments of reading attitudes were studied. Finally, the researcher cited

past studies of reading interests of both average and gifted children.

Gifted Education and Reading

Research was initiated on the gifted student during the twenties with the monumental work of Terman. His genetic studies of children with high I.Q.'s revealed much about their needs, and recommendations were made for special education to help them realize their own potential. Many researchers showed a regretable failure of school personnel to offer adequate instruction in the area of reading and the neglect of the gifted was generally conceded during the period before 1950 (Witty, 1971:1).

About 1950, an increase in attention was directed toward the gifted student following the publication of Terman and Oden's The Gifted Child Grows Up. Newly formed organizations for the gifted also helped draw attention and interest to the problems of inadequate education for these children. But the problem was amplified by the tendency of school people to focus their attention on the slow-learning and disabled child (Witty, 1971:1). As Concannon so correctly stated the problem:

> Society has not given the same attention to the education of the genius as has been given other groups. We spend millions every year for the mentally retarded. The unfortunate child of superior intellect spends his time in the usual commonplace school assimilating a diet far below his expected capacity. The gifted child poses one of our greatest present day problems beginning in the home and ultimately becoming a concern of the school (Friedel, 1979:2).

Equality of opportunity demands that each child be given access to the type of education which best meets his or her needs and capabilities. It is the legal responsibility of the state and the local districts to furnish an acceptable program (Friedel, 1979:2).

In 1978 Missouri Schools featured several articles on education for the gifted. Two years later, the same journal published facts stating that the number of school districts receiving state assistance for their gifted programs had doubled and the number of students served had increased to 8,500 (Sanders, 1980:6). Then, through the investigator's limited correspondence with the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in August 1980, the totals were raised to 69 districts which had gifted programs serving 8,868 students ("State-Assisted Gifted Programs").

The data collected may be interpreted to mean that there exists a growing interest and concern for the gifted children in Missouri. In reviewing program descriptions included in the state department mailing, reporters from only five districts cited reading as an area of concentrated study. It has been shown in other research that gifted pupils have special needs in every subject area, but particularly in the field of reading is there a notable neglect of instruction (Witty, 1971:2).

Recent books published on the gifted contain very little on the importance of reading for this group. An examination of literature on innovations as well, revealed that

there is an almost complete disregard of the role of reading for the gifted (Witty, 1971:2). Some authors, such as Barbe, Tisdall, Strang, and Witty are concerned with reading, but many researchers of gifted children report findings about the gifted's reading, not what their needs are and how they should be met (Witty, 1971:2).

It is interesting to note these researchers' findings to put the area of reading and the gifted into proper perspective:

1. A large portion of the gifted attain a degree of mastery in reading prior to receiving formal instruction (Durr, 1966:34).

2. One-third to one-half of gifted children have begun to read before going to school (Gold, 1965:42).

3. Almost 40% have learned to read before the age of five and some as early as three or four years of age (Witty, 1971:6).

4. A substantial group of children have been located who at the age of two or three years were reading at the second grade level or above (Robinson, Roedell, and Jackson, 1979:146).

5. Gifted children make a mean gain of 1.8 years of reading age for every year in school (Durr, 1964:34).

6. Gifted children read more than twice the amount by volume than average children (Gold, 1965:43).

7. By the time many gifted children are twelve years old they have read hundreds of books (Witty, 1977:39).

8. The gifted will show preference for books usually preferred by older children (Witty, 1971:21).

9. They have a large vocabulary, a high level of reading ability, and a wide variety of reading interests (Witty, 1971:21).

10. Mentally superior students continue to do much personal reading through the secondary school period (Gray, 1960:1108).

In view of all these findings, one must come to his or her own conclusions about reading and the gifted. However, Terman and Lima stated it well in their book, "There is no trait more characteristic of the gifted than the ability and desire to learn to read" (1931:59).

In summary, research for decades has pointed to a lack of reading instruction in gifted programs, even though researchers keep finding infallible links between reading and the gifted. Missouri's interest in the gifted has risen and new districts have added programs; but, of these programs, a large percentage leave out reading as an area of instruction. The findings have shown that gifted children are interested in reading, so a more in depth approach to uncovering their reading interests, their reading habits, and their attitudes about reading is long overdue.

Reading Attitudes

Only a small number of studies have been completed on the influence of attitudes on reading interest (Harris and

Sipay, 1975:515). Certainly, how pupils feel about reading is as essential as whether they are able to read (Estes, 1971:135). With these thoughts in mind, it seemed important for the investigator to review studies on reading attitudes.

Some attitude assessment instruments have been developed by British researchers, but the major work in the field has been accomplished by Americans (Ewing, 1977:2-3). The most widely referred to attitude scales were developed by Estes, Kennedy and Halinsky, and Freeley. Each of these instruments will be briefly reviewed.

The Estes Reading Attitude Scale is a Likert-type self-report instrument consisting of twenty items. The student's score is a quantitative reflection of his attitude toward reading (Estes, 1971:138). Estes reported a split half reliability coefficient of .94, but a possible problem is the low ceiling in the elementary grades (clustering of scores at the high end of the scale). It seems to be a good instrument for older students but it may not be sensitive to lower grade students due to different levels of reading ability (Zirkel and Greene, 1976:108).

Kennedy and Halinsky also developed a Likert-type self-report instrument. It was designed for measuring the reading attitudes of secondary school students and consisted of forty items. The authors reported a split-half reliability coefficient of .93 and showed evidence of criterion validity. Due to its length and level, the use of the Kennedy-Halinsky instrument in younger grades is limited (Kennedy and

Halinsky, 1975:518).

Feeley also developed an inventory instrument consisting of ficticious annotated titles to which students were asked to respond on a like-dislike scale and a media scale (Feeley, 1979:126). The instrument merits attention and expanded research but does not meet the broad need for assessing elementary reading attitudes (Zirkel and Greene, 1976:108).

As a result of the interesting treatment of the area of reading attitudes, a study by Brown, Engin, and Wallbrown should be mentioned. The authors divided the area of reading attitudes into eight dimensions. The names of the dimensions are:

1. Expressed reading difficulty;
2. Reading as direct reinforcement;
3. Reading as enjoyment;
4. Alternative learning modes;
5. Reading anxiety;
6. Reading group;
7. Silent versus oral reading; and
8. Comics.

The data drawn from their instrument found appreciable developmental changes in reading attitudes during the intermediate grades. The findings also suggested that data from students at different grade levels should be analyzed separately and checked for developmental trends (1979:62).

In 1971 Saul's research enabled him to make some statements about reading and attitudes that serves as a good summary for this section. He concluded that:

> . . . there were significant relationships between the number of books read and the pupil's attitude toward reading, the pupil's reading ability, and home and teacher encouragement. Attitudes do not necessarily entail interest. . . . Attitude does vary with the reader's level of reading ability, background, efforts, and peer influences. They are unique, personal, and highly unpredictable. Perhaps with the advent of scales to measure reading attitudes, more research will be done in this area (Harris and Sipay, 1975:516).

Reading Interests

> Discriminating and intelligent reading is an important factor in education. Children receive their knowledge of life--their education--from three sources: verbal instruction, personal experience or observation, and reading. The child who reads easily and has been taught to seek for himself the information that may be found in books has taken the surest and shortest road to knowledge. He may learn in a few hours facts that the child who does not read may learn only after years of experience (Terman and Lima, 1931:3).

For the gifted, more than anyone else, reading represents a major avenue of learning, a source of enjoyment, and a means for enriched living (Gold, 1965:209). The researchers kept finding evidence that showed reading could be successful only if the interests of the children were secured. An examination of the reading situations in Austria showed clearly that the exceptional classes where the children read well and extensively were not those in which the teacher concentrated on reading skills. The teacher's main object was to develop joy in reading through enthusiasm for books from

the beginning of reading instruction (Bamberger, 1974:61).

Smith carried those thoughts when she wrote:

> One of the major goals of schools should be to help students become lifetime readers. . . . Provide for the development not only of reading skills but also of habits of reading for recreation. . . . The primary emphasis should be on the pleasure development a student receives from reading (1974:208).

The research of Namekawa revealed the necessity for Japanese teachers to develop children's interests in reading and help them form a reading habit through arousing their interests. Literature from the United States has helped the Japanese improve books for children by stimulating their writers, but they fear that books will lose out to TV, cartoons, and comics (Namekawa, 1974:66-68).

A group of three Americans undertook an international study of children's reading interests. Kirsch, Pehrson, and Robinson surveyed 2,113 children from Austria, Canada, England, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, The Republic of Panama, Sweden, and the United States. Their data was collected on a one-to-one basis through interviews and comparisons were made according to country, sex, intelligence, reading level, chronological age, and years in school. Their findings were:

1. There appear to be more similarities in children's reading interests than there are differences.

2. For children in the first year of school, the top three topics of interest in order were fairy tales and fantasies, stories about children and stories about real animals.

3. Fifty percent of the first grade children cited Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, The Three Bears, and Jack and the Beanstalk as favorites.

4. In the second year of school, children ranked reading preferences as fairy tales and fantasies, information about animals, and stories about children.

5. Science information and science fiction were ranked lowest for both grades of children.

6. Young children throughout the world appear to have many similar reading interests (Kirsch, Pehrson, and Robinson, 1974:302-317).

From the preceding information, it would seem that the reading interests of children have received not only American concern, but also global concern.

Perhaps the first study of reading interests was made by True in 1893 when he reported What My Pupils Read. In 1925 and 1935 Terman and Lima conducted research with both gifted and average children (Greenlaw and Wielan, 1979: 432). They concluded that, "There are certain well-defined tendencies in reading interests that change as the child's experience grows and as his imagination and reasoning powers develop" (Barbe, 1965:266).

Prior to the 1960's approximately 300 investigations of reading interests and topics through questionnaire, interviews, and library techniques were published according to Gray. Such studies allowed some broad generalizations to be made chiefly based upon American research, but there was

supporting research from other English-speaking countries. The generalizations were:

1. Interest in book reading tends to increase with schooling and then either stabilize or decline after adolescence;

2. Interest in newspaper and magazine reading follows a similar pattern beyond the primary grades;

3. Fiction is preferred to factual exposition and prose to poetry in elementary and secondary schools; and

4. In general, specific reading interests vary widely according to age, sex, intellectual ability, social class, and reading ability (Harris, 1969:1074).

More recent research in reading preferences and habits has tended to become more particularized. For example, Peltola (1963) found little correspondence between first grade children's book choices and books judged superior by adults. Although Macdonald (1966) found that first grade children preferred reading to other subjects, other recent researchers at higher grade levels suggested that there is less tendency currently for students to prefer reading as an activity (Harris, 1969:1074).

With over eight decades of research on children's reading interests, it seemed important for the investigator to transmit information discovered from the major studies of the past fifty years.

In a book written by Barbe, a long-time advocate of reading and writer about the education of the gifted, re-

search on reading was summarized. He found that authors agreed that few differences in reading choices appeared until children reached the age of nine. Divergence was marked and continued to widen up to adult life. Also, at every age level, girls read more than boys. Moreover, boys read more nonfiction than girls, but both liked animal stories (1965: 266).

Lazar (1937), Sterner (1947), and Taylor and Schneider (1955) reported the differences found in reading interests due to the sex of the reader. Lazar found that both boys and girls ranked mystery stories first, but boys' second choice was adventure. Girls chose stories related to the home. The study by Sterner coincided when she reported that boys preferred adventure while girls chose modern fiction. Taylor and Scheider found that boys chose adventure, sports, and games as titles while girls chose titles classified as teen-age and romance (Barbe, 1965:266).

The pillars of research on reading interests were executed by Terman and Lima and Norvell. These studies are extensive, cover years of research, and contained the outside variables that affect children's interests.

The Studies of Terman and Lima

By keeping reading records, Terman was able to determine that at the age of ten and eleven, the number of books read by the students he studied showed more of a decided increase. By this age reading had become a pleasure

instead of a task. The age of ten is marked by a falling off of interest in fairy tales and were replaced by books about travel and other lands, myths, and biographies. At age eleven children were found to be interested in series books and at the age of twelve, children showed some interest in almost every field of literature. Boys of twelve, at this time, had the greatest interest in biography and history. Girls on the other hand, had dawning interest in adult fiction (Terman and Lima, 1931:27-47).

In Terman and Lima's study of the gifted, it was found that the difference in the reading interests of experimental gifted groups and control groups were very great with respect to the number of books read and the age at which they were read. Their researchers showed that exceptionally bright children read on the average three or four times as many books as average children. One question raised was whether gifted children read more because they were bright or whether they were bright because they have read more. Terman answered this by saying:

> Although no one would claim that much reading has no effect whatever on mental tests score, we can say with a good deal of assurance that brightness is far more cause than effect. . . . Mental tests by which the intelligence of our gifted children was rated make but slight demands upon the kind of information which children get from their general reading (1931:56-57).

Terman also tabulated data as to the amount of time per week gifted children read. He found they read from eight to ten hours a week and most notably, eight of his

study group were reading twenty hours a week before the age of five. It would seem that general intelligence influences not only the amount of reading, but also the age at which reading is learned. Two other findings of this study are interesting:

1. Gifted children read a far wider range with emphsis in nonfiction; and

2. The reading of the gifted was of a better, average quality than that of the control group (Terman and Lima, 1931:52-62).

Finally, Terman and Lima's research on the categories of reading interests revealed three outstanding contrasts:

1. Of the books read by boys, 56% were stories of adventure or mystery, while only 18% of those read by girls belonged in this category;

2. Thirty-two percent of the books read by girls, and only 2½% of those read by boys, were stories of home and school life; and

3. Sixteen percent of the books read by girls and only 3½% of those read by boys were classified as emotional fiction (1931:72).

Norvell's Study

In studying the area of reading interests, Norvell first noted the existence of three trends to vitalize reading interests. One group insisted that adults should choose

classic literature for students to know. A second approach was to use the lightweight materials that were popular with the students. The third method was to provide students with an ample supply of literary selections which stand where the lines of student popularity and critical approval converge. It is with this last trend that Norvell tried to gain knowledge as to the reasons for the reading interests of pupils (Norvell, 1973:3-4).

First, Norvell saw general interest factors influencing reading due to three inherent factors: intelligence, age, and sex. He cited special interest factors as those residing in humor, prosaic, and adventure. He contended that the general interest factors studied, along with attention to the special interest factors, could show the influence upon young people's reading interests (Norvell, 1973:26).

Next, Norvell conducted and reviewed research that directly opposed the findings of Terman. Norvell agreed with Coy, in that content, rather than literary quality is responsible for reading preferences. To further that point, Norvell cited Coy, who compared a class of gifted with an average class and found, "In literary value of the books preferred, the two groups are practically equal" (1973:30). Then, Norvell found in his own study in grades four, five, and six that selections of outstanding quality were better liked by all students compared with the superior by an average of 1.3 points. In 1958, Norvell reported that for students in grades four, five, and six, humor is almost equally favored

by children of different levels of intelligence. He sided with Thorndike in the view that the interests of eight through eleven-year-olds do not change greatly, but that changes are small and gradual (Norvell, 1973:37-40).

And finally, selections by the superior and the average were compared as to preferences. Norvell found that:

> The selections well-liked by the superior (student, sic.) are liked also by the weak and selections rejected by the weak are the ones rejected by the superior (1973:28).

Two Studies of Intelligence and Reading

Studies by Tibbetts (1975) and Witty and Lehman (1932) are pertinent in this study because they were designed expressly for the area of reading interests and intelligence. Although the studies are much more limited in scope than those of Terman, Lima, and Norvell, their content is informative.

Witty and Lehman's research dealt primarily with the amount of time spent in reading and what topics gifted children read. They found that the average time spent for the gifted boys in leisure reading was 5½ hours per week, while the gifted girls averaged 6½ hours per week. The control group for the study averaged 3 hours in leisure reading per week. In reference to the amount of reading, the average number of books read in a two month interval was twelve for the gifted and five for the control group. When dealing with the kind of reading gifted children enjoyed, Witty and

Lehman discovered three major tendencies:

1. Girls best-liked reading topics were novels of romance and those topics dealing with home and school life;

2. Boys reported novels of adventure and mystery as favorites; and

3. Both the boys and the girls enjoyed detective stories (1932:478-480).

According to this study of intelligence and reading interests, boys and girls have very different preferences in reading topics. Also, girls spend more time reading than do boys.

In her study, Tibbetts further verified three points in respect to the differences between the reading of bright and average children:

1. The number of books read was due to advanced reading maturity;

2. The range of topics covered may be accountable to a higher intelligence; and

3. The age which various types of books are read may be due to a hierarchy of interests through which all children advance; the gifted just advance more quickly.

The evidence may be interpreted to mean that intelligence may be a factor in determining the range, amount, and quality of a child's reading material, as well as contributing to the chronological age at which a child develops a particular interest (Tibbetts, 1975:89-91).

Summary

Present day reading interests of children provide a mystery and challenge for many teachers (Heider, 1966:111). How best to vitalize the interests of students is a matter of controversy (Norvell, 1973:3). While keeping reading records and having a knowledge of reading interest trends is helpful to teachers, the factors of individual interests of each child should be considered. Teachers should also realize that a number of factors seem to influence reading interests but none of these factors seem to operate in isolation (Harris and Sipay, 1975:514). The review of literature in this chapter has been presented in the light of various factors (age, sex, intelligence, and content of materials). In view of all the literature reviewed, the procedure and instrument were developed by the investigator. These will be looked at in depth in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

OBTAINING THE DATA

Reading seems to play a significant part in the lives of gifted children. Therefore, their reading interests should be paramount to the professionals who are working with them. This study consisted of a review of literature on reading interests and attitudes and a survey of the reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children in Missouri to allow this investigator to answer the questions:

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

2. Will there be a difference in the order of preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

After an independent study on the topic of the reading of gifted children, the investigator became aware of a lack of literature on these children's reading interests. The review of related literature revealed that there were very few research studies and most of the major research in reading interests had taken place in the 1950's. Some new research had been completed in the 1970's, but very little

was concerned with gifted children. In view of these findings, the purpose of the study was to determine the reading interests of gifted children.

Procedure

First questions were formulated upon which to base the study. Three major questions were fashioned along with eleven specific questions. Because the investigator needed to report the reading interests of gifted children by answering the prescribed fourteen questions, a descriptive study was decided upon. According to Best (1977:117):

> Descriptive research, sometimes known as non-experimental research, deals with the relationships between variables, the testing of hypotheses, and the development of generalizations, principles, or theories that have universal validity. It is concerned with functional relationships. . . . The researcher doesn't manipulate the variables or arrange for events to happen. The method of descriptive research is particularly appropriate in the behavioral sciences, because many of the types of behavior that interest the researcher cannot be arranged in a realistic setting.

The investigator selected a limited population which could be studied. Since the investigator lived in Missouri and Missouri had established laws in 1973 to establish standards for gifted programs, that state was chosen to conduct the survey. Through limited correspondence with the state department director of gifted education, a list of state-assisted programs was obtained. The list cited districts with programs, the number of students being served, the coordinators of the programs, and descriptions of the programs. The investigator then researched various types of methods

used to obtain information in a descriptive study.

Survey Methods

Considering the type of study, the population, and the time allowed, a survey was decided to be the instrument to collect data. According to Best (1977:118):

> The survey method gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. It is not concerned with the characteristics of individuals. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that result when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases.

There are many different ways available to record and describe behaviors. Six survey methods were found and each was considered.

Interviews. The strength of interviews is that personal feelings and attitudes are more likely to be demonstrated when a person is subject to direct questioning, rather than when responding anonymously. This is also a more searching approach than is offered by a pencil and paper test. But for large work, interviewing is either impractical or expensive, and it is likely to be restricted to a small sample work (Ewing, 1977:4-5).

Sentence completion and open-ended questioning. With sentence completion measures, subjects are provided with untinished sentences. This method does produce a wide range of answers but there is difficulty in the post-hoc coding of the responses. The open-ended questioning method also allows for individuality in responses but is likely to be restricted in

length due to the amount of time allowed (Ewing, 1977:8-9).

Likert-type scale. With the Likert-type scale the subject is required to indicate degrees of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The method requires the designer to write a balanced number of positive and negative statements to discriminate the subjects' feelings. This method is scored so that it allows comparison of one person's responses with those of another (Ewing, 1977:5-6).

Semantic differential scales. This approach was proposed by Osgood and requires a subject to rate a statement on several factors. The factors are evaluation (the statement rating represents good or bad), activity (the statement is rated active or passive), and potency (the statement rating is on the basis of strong and weak). The difficulty of this approach lies in the fact that it has very low face validity and it shows up in the responses (Ewing, 1977:10-11).

Personal constructs in repertory grids. In this method, subjects are asked to check responses on a grid ranking real life situations to the way they are perceived. The prominent drawback is that lengthy investigations are required to arrive at constructs before the grid can be designed and applied (Ewing, 1977:11-12).

Self reports. Subjects are asked a series of [illegible] tions relating to a list of situations. It is similar to open-ended questioning but requires more structure. The

strength of the method lies in the fact that the same format can be extended through different age levels for one area of interest (Ewing, 1977:12-13).

After due consideration of the size of the population, the amount of time involved, the ages of the population, and the treatment of the data, a Likert scale with some open-ended questions was decided upon.

The Instrument

A successful Likert scale contains items which discriminate between different views held by the subjects the scale is designed to describe (Ewing, 1977:6). The investigator decided to review the positions of gifted children about reading in the categories of attitudes, habits, and interests.

For positions on reading attitudes, the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Rhody and Alexander, 1980: 612), the 70-Item Attitude Instrument (Kennedy and Halinsky, 1975:520), and the Reading Attitude Scale (Estes, 1971:138) were reviewed by the researcher. The researcher formulated twenty statements expressing an opinion about reading with an equal number of statements being favorable and unfavorable. For the positive statements, a value of 5 was assigned to "strongly agree" reducing to a value of 1 for "strongly disagree." The converse scoring of 1 through 5 was applied to negatively stated items. The subjects would be required to mark an X, to express an opinion.

The North Central Library Reading Questionnaire (Nord, 1972:100-105), a questionnaire by Gerald H. Maring (1976:449), and the Survey of Literary Experience and Understanding (Mindell and Stracher, 1980:75) were examined and five main questions were developed by adding sub-questions requiring short written responses. These sub-questions were designed into the section to help validate the subjects' yes or no responses.

In order to develop the category of reading interests, the Reading Interests Checklist (Heathington, 1979:711) and the North Central Library Reading Questionnaire (Nord, 1972: 100-105) were analyzed. One long list of different areas of reading interest was developed in the form of a checklist. Each of the thrity-one items were to be ranked by acknowledging a preference for the area. The section was scored by assigning "greatly dislike" a value of 1, rising to a value of 5 for "like very much".

The final instrument was divided into three main sections with the headings of: I. Reading Attitudes, II. Reading Experiences, and III. Reading Interest Checklist. It was typed so that both the front and back sheet of the paper could be utilized (Appendix C). The scoring of the instrument yielded frequency data to be recorded on computer sheets with the exception of the short written responses in section II. That information needed to be hand-tallied.

The completed instrument was examined by two faculty members from the School of Education and Psychology of

Southwest Missouri State University. They found the survey to be a valid instrument and endorsed its use for the research in this study.

Data Collection

The instrument was duplicated and envelopes were addressed and stuffed by the researcher during the first week of March 1981. Inside each envelope was a cover letter written by the thesis advisor (Appendix A), ten survey forms, and a letter of request to allow gifted children to fill out the surveys during their free time (Appendix B). A stamped, self-addressed envelope was included to allow the participants in the study to return the surveys by March 18 to the investigator. The envelopes were mailed on March 6 to the 69 coordinators whose names were on a list of Missouri's "State-Assisted Programs for Gifted Students: 1980-81."

By the end of March only 23 envelopes had been received by the investigator. During the first week of April the targeted program directors were telephoned and the surveys were requested. Through the process of telephoning it was discovered that some programs received a letter from the director of gifted education in the state department encouraging them to decline participation in the study (Appendix D).

The investigator had no knowledge of the letter being mailed prior to the telephoning and it is suspected that there may be a relationship between the letter and the amount of completed surveys returned. On April 21 it was

assumed that all the surveys that were going to be sent by the coordinators had been returned (Appendix E). There were 31 returned answered, 2 returned unanswered, and 36 that were not returned to this investigator. It should be noted that 2 programs did return information, but it did not involve fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children. Some of the respondents were very generous and returned not only ten surveys, but as many surveys as they had students. This data was written onto computer sheets, then sent to the Computer Center at Southwest Missouri State University. There the items on the computer sheets were coded for the computer analysis (Appendix F).

Several types of answers were needed from the calculation of data. How do fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children feel about reading? What are the reading habits of these children? How did the total number of respondents rank each area of reading interests? Do the findings from the participants agree or disagree with the findings from the review of literature? Also, a section of the survey contained answers that had to be hand tallied by the investigator to answer two further questions. Who are the favorite authors of gifted children? What are the favorite books of gifted children?

Treatment

Data received from the programs surveyed were written onto computer sheets. The statistical package (SPSS,V8)

was entered into the computer by means of a card keypunched with the information from the computer sheets. Frequency data resulted in terms of means, standard deviations, and cumulative percentages. The computer then tabulated the data on a print-out sheet which allowed it to be analyzed by the investigator.

Summary

Because of a lack of information on the reading interests of gifted children, the investigator designed a study to survey the reading interests of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children in the state of Missouri. An instrument was developed using principally a Likert scale to obtain frequency data. The analysis of this data will comprise Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For many years researchers and writers have referred to the value of seeking and utilizing children's interests. It is evident that reading plays an important role in the lives of gifted children, so their interests should be paramount to the professional educators who work with them. It became the purpose of the investigator to design a study to identify the reading interests of gifted children enrolled in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted programs in the state of Missouri. The study was further implemented to determine the reading attitudes and reading habits of these children. Information obtained through the survey instrument was tallied to aid the investigator's answers to the questions:

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

2. Will there be a difference in the order or preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

More specific questions were needed to unlock the answers to the three broad questions.

Questions to be Answered

In addition to the three main questions, eleven specific questions were formulated:

1. What is the order of preference of gifted children in reading materials? (a) information-scientific, (b) information-historic, (c) information-current, (d) realistic fiction, (e) imaginative fiction, (f) humor, (g) poetry and arts

2. What is the general attitude of gifted children about reading?

3. What is the average amount of time gifted children spend in recreational reading?

4. Will gifted children have a favorite author and look specifically for more of that author's writing?

5. Will gifted children reveal that a book has changed their lives by giving them new ideas or goals?

6. Will gifted children reveal that they have read a book more than one or two times?

7. Will gifted children reveal that reading changes their thinking and actions?

8. Will there be a difference in preferences of reading materials between gifted boys and girls?

9. Which title selections are seriously disliked by gifted children?

10. What are the implications of the study for the teaching of reading and literature to gifted children?

11. What is the influence of intelligence upon reading interests?

Findings

The findings cited in this chapter resulted from the computer print-out sheets obtained from the computer at Southwest Missouri State University on May 19, 1981. Because the three major questions from the Statement of the Problem were so broad, the investigator first considered the eleven specific questions.

1. What is the order of preference of gifted children in reading materials? (a) information-scientific, (b) information-historic, (c) information-current, (d) realistic fiction, (e) imaginative fiction, (f) humor, (g) poetry and arts

The 31 descriptors of reading interests were divided into seven major areas as shown in Table 1 on page 40. The descriptors were numerically rated in the survey instrument 1 to 5. The number 1 was an opinion of "dislike greatly" progressing upward to 5 as an expression of "like very much." Table 1 lists the results of the frequency data by the means (X) of each topic and the averaged mean of each area. The final results of the seven areas in order were: (1) humor, (2) realistic fiction, (3) imaginative fiction, (4) information-historic, (5) information-current, (6) information-scientific, and (7) poetry and arts.

Table 1

Reading Interest Areas Ranked by Preference

Area $\bar{X}$	Interest Area	Topics	Topic $\bar{X}$
4.3082	Humor	comedy	4.3082
3.8339	Realistic fiction	mysteries	4.2945
		adventures	4.1473
		boys/girls my age	4.0171
		romance/love	2.8767
3.6387	Imaginative fiction	myths and legends	4.0240
		science fiction	3.9075
		animals	3.4897
		folklore	3.1336
3.1183	Information-historic	famous people	3.6267
		history	3.3699
		biographies of women	3.3288
		biographies of men	3.2397
		prehistoric world	3.2192
		archaeology	3.1712
		world problems	2.7945
		Black studies	2.7158
		social studies	2.5993
2.9911	Information-current	sports	3.5514
		travel	3.3562
		different languages	2.9281
		food and cooking	2.6541
		religions	2.4658
2.9623	Information-scientific	nature study	3.3151
		science	3.0068
		applied science	2.8082
		human body/health	2.7192
2.8245	Poetry and arts	crafts and hobbies	3.2603
		art	2.7192
		poetry	2.6918
		music	2.6267

2. What is the general attitude of gifted children about reading?

The reading attitudes section of the survey, consisting of twenty statements requiring a rating of "strongly disagree" through "strongly agree," was used to answer the question. The positive and negative means were combined and the mean of the total questions was 4.10, indicating the population had a positive attitude toward reading. Means for boys and girls were listed separately to show that girls consistently ranked the statements higher than the boys (Appendix G). The means were also averaged separately to show the girls to have a more positive attitude about reading with a mean of 4.22 and a mean of 3.99 for the boys in the study.

3. What is the average amount of time gifted children spend in recreational reading?

The question was scored one point for one to three hours of reading, two points for four to six hours of reading, three points for seven to ten hours of reading, and four points for ten or more reading hours. The mean for the entire population was 2.43, showing the group read four to six hours per week outside of assignments. By ages, the thirteen-year-olds spent significantly more time in recreational reading than the other age groups. The fifth graders spent the most hours in leisure reading when data for grade levels was reviewed. It is interesting to note that the data revealed girls to spend more time in recreational reading than boys.

4. Will gifted children have a favorite author and look specifically for more of that author's writing?

The answers to the questions were found in the group of questions for number two, under section II. The questions on the survey were scored one point for yes and zero for no. The mean for the entire population was 0.59 indicating around half of the gifted children had a favorite author. The data showed that a greater amount of girls had a favorite author than boys. Among the favorite authors cited by the survey group were Judy Blume, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Beverly Cleary. The mean for the group was .71 on the question of looking for more of a favorite author's writing. This mean indicated that a great number of gifted children looked specifically for more writing of a preferred author. When data corresponding to sex was scrutinized, a marked difference was found between boys and girls. The girls looked more frequently for additional writing of an author whose work they enjoyed reading.

5. Will gifted children reveal that a book has changed their lives by giving them new ideas or goals?

The question was scored one point for yes and zero for no. The mean for the entire group was 0.68, which revealed that a few more than half of the survey group had been given new ideas or goals through reading. Again, the data showed a greater amount of girls effected the findings, the girls felt their lives were changed by books more than the boys.

6. Will gifted children reveal that they have read a book more than one or two times?

The answer to the question was brought forth by the third group of questions in section II. of the survey. The mean of 0.91 for the gifted population surveyed showed that most of the group had read a book more than once. In reviewing the data, the investigator found a marked difference between grade levels. The fourth graders expressed most strongly that they had read many books more than one time.

7. Will gifted children reveal that reading changes their thinking and actions?

The survey question was answered by yes or no and was scored one, or zero. A mean of .46 indicated that less than half of the survey population had had their thinking or actions changed by a book. The data showed a notable difference between the sexes. More than half the girls revealed changes made in their thinking caused by reading, while less than half of the boys had felt reading changed their thinking. A mean of .31 indicated that only a few gifted children's actions had been changed through reading.

8. Will there be a difference in preference of gifted boys and girls of reading materials?

The Reading Interests Checklist section of the survey was used to answer the question. The titles of reading

interests were listed by means in numerical order beginning with those closest to 5 and descending to the closest to 1 (Appendix H). Table 2 shows boys and girls top selections.

Table 2

Preferences in Reading Materials listed by Sex

Boys		Girls	
Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores	Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
comedy	4.3333		
science fiction	4.3333	mystery	4.4138
adventure	4.2245	boys/girls my age	4.3793
mystery	4.1769	comedy	4.2828
myths and legends	4.0612	adventure	4.0690
sports	4.0408	myths and legends	3.9862

Table 2 reveals that the top five choices for the boys were: (1) comedy and science fiction, (2) adventure, (3) mystery, (4) myths and legends, and (5) sports. The girls top selections were: (1) mysteries, (2) boys/girls my age, (3) comedy, (4) adventure, and (5) myths and legends. It is interesting to note that after t-values and levels of significance were reviewed, sixteen of the thirty-one title selcetions showed a significant difference. This resulted because of a difference in interests between boys and girls (Appendix I). The topics the girls expressed more interest in than boys were: art, biographies of women, boys/girls my age, food and cooking, different languages, music, poetry, Black studies, travel, love/romance, and religions. The boys expressed a greater interest

in the topics of applied science, prehistoric world, science, science fiction, and sports than the girls.

9. Which title selections are seriously disliked by gifted children?

When the entire population was studied, the means revealed that the least popular topics were poetry, food and cooking, music, social studies, and religions. The topics most seriously disliked by boys were music, religions, food and cooking, romance/love, and poetry. The girls most disliked topics were social studies, religions, world problems, science, and applied science. The fourth graders expressed their greatest dislike in the topics of romance/love, applied science, world problems, Black studies, music, and religions. The topics most seriously disliked by fifth graders were music, art, poetry, social studies, and religions. And finally, the sixth graders expressed dislike in the topics of health, art and music, religions, social studies, and food and cooking.

Questions ten and eleven were not specifically asked in the survey instrument. They will be looked at in perspective to all the findings in Chapter 5.

Based on the previous answers to the specific questions, the findings for the major questions became more distinct. The answers for the three major questions and a summary will conclude the chapter.

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

Section III., the Reading Interests Checklist, of the survey instrument was used to answer the question. The means of the topics were ranked in numerical order in Appendix J to reveal the distribution of the selections. Table 3

Table 3

The Top Reading Interest Preferences Ranked by the Survey Population

Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
comedy	4.3082
mysteries	4.2967
adventure	4.1373
myths and legends	4.0240
boys/girls my age	4.0170

evolved from that appendix to exhibit the top five selections. The top five choices for the entire survey population were: (1) comedy, (2) mysteries, (3) adventure, (4) myths and legends, and (5) boys/girls my age. It should be noted that science fiction was the next choice and received a great enough score to be considered a favorite.

2. Will there be a difference in the order of preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

The means were listed for each type or reading material in the survey in numerical order according to grade levels (Appendixes K, L, and M). The results were much the same for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade separately as they had been when listed as an entire population. Table 4

Table 4

The Top Reading Interest Preferences
Ranked by Grade Levels

4th Grade Topics	5th Grade Topics	6th Grade Topics
mystery	mystery	comedy
comedy	comedy	boys/girls my age
adventure	myths and legends	adventure
myths and legends	adventure	mystery
science fiction	boys/girls my age	myths and legends

reveals that fifth and sixth grade topic selections were identical, only ranked in different orders. The fourth graders topics were closely related to the fifth and sixth graders selections, with science fiction being substituted for the topic of boys/girls my age.

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

To answer the question, each of the twenty statements in the Reading Attitudes section of the survey were reviewed. The twenty statements expressing an opinion about reading were formulated with an equal number of positive and negative statements. The positive statements are noted by a

capital (P) after the statement and are assigned a value of 5 for "strongly agree" reducing to a value of 1 for "strongly disagree." The negative statements are noted by a capital (N) and the converse scoring of 1 through 5 was applied.

1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment. (N)

The mean for the entire population on the statement was 4.43, registering an opinion of disagree. The consistency between all the age groups and the two sexes pushed the mean notably high.

2. Reading is easy. (P)

The mean for the survey population was 3.73. This presented the population as undecided about the statement, but the rating came closer to an opinion of agreement. In analyzing the data, it was implied that fifth and sixth graders found reading harder than fourth graders.

3. I read alot. (P)

The mean for the statement was 4.29 for the survey population. This showed agreement with the statement. The data exhibited a marked difference between the sexes on this question. The girls in all grades read more than boys.

4. I think reading is boring. (N)

The mean for the entire population was 4.45, showing the statement to be one the gifted children disagreed with.

A marked difference was indicated between the sexes. The means for the girls showed that they felt more strongly than the boys that reading was not boring.

5. Reading is something I can do without. (N)

The mean for the survey population was 4.42, which indicated disagreement by the gifted children. No major differences were found between age groups, grade levels, or boys and girls.

6. There should be more time during the day to read. (P)

A mean of 4.07 was established by the survey population, which indicated a low opinion of agreement. A notable difference was indicated between the sexes. The girls opinions were more in favor of additional time for reading than the boys.

7. I love to read. (P)

The statement received a mean score of 4.30 from the entire population. This indicated that the population agreed with the statement. An important difference was found between the sexes. The girls expressed that they loved to read more than the boys. The girls total mean for the statement was 4.5103, while the mean registered by the boys was 4.1020. This one opinion related to many of the differences found between boys and girls attitudes toward reading.

8. I get tired when I read. (N)

The mean for the statement was 3.33, which indicated the survey population was undecided about the statement. No major differences were found among boys or girls or between age groups.

9. I have alot of my own books at home. (P)

The mean for the entire population was 4.47, indicating that the population agreed and had alot of their own books. When the data was closely investigated, no large differences were found among groups.

10. There are better things to do than read. (N)

The negative statement yielded a mean of 3.23 for the survey population, indicating the population was distinctly undecided about the statement. The mean for the girls was 3.4483 and for the boys it was 3.0340. This data revealed a very great difference between the sexes.

11. I seldom read except when I have an assignment. (N)

The mean for the entire population was 4.36 which indicated that the survey population disagreed. This data led the investigator to believe that gifted children must exercise recreational reading. The data did not show any differences between age groups, grade levels, or sexes.

12. Reading is a good way to spend spare time. (P)

The mean was 4.33 for the survey population and indicated that the group was in agreement. A marked difference was found bewteen boys and girls. Again, the girls felt more strongly about the statement than the boys.

13. I like to share books with my friends. (P)

The mean for the statement was 3.78, presenting an undecided reaction to the statement. The gifted children's response did come close to being in agreement. The girls viewed the statement as being more true with a mean of 4.0669.

14. Books make good presents. (P)

The statement was represented by a mean of 3.90, indicating the population was technically undecided but almost in agreement. A notable difference was shown between the sexes because the girls ranked the statement in firm agreement, with the boys tending to be undecided.

15. I hate reading. (N)

A mean of 4.62 was found for the entire population. This indicated the gifted were in strong disagreement with the statement. The mean for the girls was 4.77 while the mean for the boys was 4.46. It is interesting to note that the converse statement (7.) received lower total means by both sexes than did this statement.

16. Very few books are interesting to read. (N)

The mean for the group was 4.07 showing firm disagreement with the statement. The data revealed that girls disagreed more strongly with the statement than did the boys.

17. I like to expand my interests through reading.(P)

A mean of 4.03 was shown for the population which indicated their agreement. No marked differences were found between groups because the subjects were so closely in agreement.

18. It takes me a long time to read a book. (N)

The population's mean was 3.84 which showed the gifted as undecided but close to disagreement. The data revealed no differences attributable to sex or age.

19. There is nothing to be gained by reading. (N)

The mean obtained was 4.63. This indicated strong disagreement by the study group. The consistency between the groups presented this opinion to be potent.

20. I sometimes become a character in a book I'm reading. (P)

The mean obtained was 3.78 indicating the population was undecided with tendencies toward agreement. The girls total mean was 3.9586 and the boys rated the statement 3.6122. This difference was notably great.

In view of the findings for the twenty statements, gifted children seem to have a positive attitude toward reading. There are, however, marked and significant differences between boys and girls in their opinions of reading.

Summary

The data from the survey instrument were reviewed to answer the questions posed in this study. The findings for each of the questions has been given in this chapter. In Chapter 5, the information will be given an extended look as to conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to provide insight into the reading interests of gifted children. Looking back, questions were formulated to identify the reading interests of gifted children, data was collected through a survey instrument, and the findings were reported. It now becomes the job of the investigator to analyze the findings of the study. The three questions the study was designed around were:

1. What are the preferences of gifted children for types of reading materials?

2. Will there be a difference in the order of preference among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted children for specific types of reading materials?

3. What are the attitudes of gifted children toward reading?

Chapter 5 will conclude the study and be comprised of a summary of the procedure, the findings of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, an analysis, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Procedure

An instrument was developed by the investigator using principally a Likert-scale to obtain frequency data.

The instrument was divided into three main section headings: I. Reading Attitudes, II. Reading Experiences, and III. the Reading Interests Checklist. The first section consisted of twenty statements expressing an opinion about reading and the subjects were to rank their opinions as to the degree of agreement or disagreement. Questions requiring short written responses about reading experiences comprised section two. The last section required the subject to acknowledge a degree of preference for each of the thirty-one items of reading interests.

The instrument was examined by two faculty members from the School of Education and Psychology of Southwest Missouri State University and found to be valid. The instrument was duplicated and ten copies, plus a cover letter and a request for study involvement were sent to the 69 coordinators of the Missouri State-Assisted Programs for Gifted Students.

The returned surveys were recorded onto computer sheets as raw data and then run through the computer at Southwest Missouri State University. The tabulated data was then analyzed by the investigator and recorded in the findings of Chapter 4.

Findings of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4

The major writers of the literature reviewed by the investigator maintained that reading is important to gifted children. The findings of this study too, indicated that

reading is a foremost part of a gifted child's life.

Saul reported that there is a significant relationship between a child's attitude toward reading and the number of books read (Harris and Sipay, 1975:516). The data in this study revealed that gifted children have a very positive attitude toward reading. Although the exact number of books read by these children is not known, the hours spent in free time reading indicated a possibility of sufficient book reading.

Terman's studies described gifted children as reading eight to ten hours weekly (1931:52-62). This study found that the survey group read four to six hours per week, a much lower total than that of Terman. However, when the data was recorded from the surveys, many children did read in excess of eight hours weekly, but these children were the exception and not the rule. It is essential to consider that the outside variables such as personal interviewing and questioning, and even the Hawthorne effect are not known and may account for Terman's higher total. The results of this study coincide more closely with those of Witty and Lehman's who found boys and girls spending five and a half to six and a half hours of leisure time a week in reading (1932:473-485).

Barbe noted that within his study population, girls read more than boys at every age (1965:266). The researcher indicated that girls spent more time reading and also read more widely than boys. The reasons for these findings may be explained by the responses in the attitude section of the sur-

vey. The girls felt more strongly than the boys that:

1. There should be more free time during the day for reading;

2. I love to read;

3. Reading is a good way to spend spare time; and

4. I like to share books with my friends.

The original statements concerning the attitudes of gifted children toward reading in Chapter 4 were answered in terms of frequency data, in non-statistical design. For better support and information among facts, t-tests were conducted for the data. When boys and girls were compared on twenty statements in the attitude section of the survey, a significant difference was shown on eleven of the statements. This information leads the investigator to cite sex as a greater determiner of reading interests than age or grade level.

Terman advocated that gifted children on the whole, read a better quality of literature (1931:52-62). In contrast, Norvell stated that literature selections were the same for children with high and low I.Q.'s (1973:30). This investigator can make no concrete statement on the issue, but is inclined to agree with Norvell. Approximately half of the survey population specified their favorite authors and books. Names and titles such as Tolkien, Poe, Verne, Tom Sawyer, A Christmas Carol, and Gone With the Wind did appear scattered throughout the responses, but with no accumulation. It is interesting to note though, that many of the responses

were selections from the 1980-81 Mark Twain List. The Mark Twain List is a selection of books recommended yearly for the children in the state of Missouri to read. Since a control group was not studied at the same time as the survey group was being polled, the writing of the investigator may be merely an opinion on the issue.

Norvell also reported that in grades four, five, and six, all children preferred humor (1973:37-40). It was a definite finding in this study that the gifted children in grades four through six preferred humor. Humor was their top selection of 31 types of reading materials.

Lazar and Schneider went on to state that the biggest determiner of differences in reading interests was due to the sex of the reader (Barbe, 1965:266). Most researchers would agree to that position and so would the investigator. The findings of the study indicated a difference between preferences by sex more than by grade level or age.

Taylor, Schneider and Sterner found that as a group, boys and girls preferred mystery. Also, they stated that girls showed a preference for romance and home stories, and boys preferred adventure (Barbe, 1965:266). The investigator's study did reveal that as a group, mystery was the second choice of gifted children, but on points of sex preference there is less agreement. The girls ranked romance as ninth in preference with their top three selections being mystery, boys/girls my age, and comedy. Gifted boys did cite adventure as a top selection preceded only by comedy and science

fiction.

Barbe contended that boys read more nonfiction than girls (1965:266). This study revealed that when looking at the top ten selections for each group, the boys and girls read nearly an equal amount of nonfiction. Out of the top ten selections, boys ranked prehistoric world as number eight, famous people as nine, and applied science as ten. Girls ranked biographies of women their number six choice, with famous people seven, and travel as ten.

Terman analyzed the reading interests of gifted children by age and grade level. He found that fourth graders preferred topics of travel, myths and biographies. Fifth graders were found to select books in a series, and sixth graders preferred to read biography and history (1931:27-47). According to the data found in this study, there is very little similarity to Terman's research. Fourth graders enjoyed reading myths (rank position of 4), but travel and biography were not favorites. Fifth graders were not given series books as an item to rank, but chances are that that topic would have ranked high. The fifth graders favorite selection was mystery, so with the Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys and Encyclopedia Brown book mysteries currently so popular, this may be one point of agreement between the two studies. Sixth graders ranked biography ninth and history thirteenth. It would not be correct to show these topics as favorites. Terman's research was executed forty to fifty years before this study and it is imagined by the investigator to have much to do

with the difference in findings.

Norvell maintained that eight through eleven-year-olds' reading interests change gradually (1973:37-40). The investigator tends to agree. Myths, mysteries, comedy, adventure, boys/girls my age, and science fiction were all the top six selections (in different orders) for grades four through six. Although the study is not longitudinal, there should be some accountability in different children of different ages selecting the same titles.

In summary, the findings of Terman conflicted with the findings of this study. His research was monumental and is still regarded by many as the unconditional philosophy for working with gifted children. The positions held by Norvell about the reading interests of gifted children were upheld in this study. These points will be expanded upon in the analysis.

Analysis

Two questions from Chapter 4 still remain unanswered and will be approached first.

10. What are the implications of the study for the teaching of reading and literature to gifted children?

This investigator has shown that gifted children have definite interests in reading. Many teachers feel that students understand more clearly and are better motivated when they are interested in what they are reading. Therefore, it

seems logical to recommend using their interests to teach reading and literature. If gifted children experience literature guided by knowledgeable teachers, they will develop interests and habits which they will retain throughout life. It is hoped that carefully guided study of literature will improve reading skills and the effects of reading will grow powerful.

11. What is the influence of intelligence upon reading interests?

For the most part, research accomplished by experts on the reading interests of gifted children and average children were refuted by this study. The relationship between intelligence and reading interests has not been clearly established by previous studies nor this one. Too many outside variables are interacting beyond the control of this study and a concrete relationship between I.Q. and reading interests cannot be clearly defined.

Essentially, much information about the reading of gifted children in Missouri was uncovered by this study. However, there is little question that this study was limited by several factors. Those factors being that none of the variables operate in isolation, the reliability of the instrument, interaction of the variables, and the limitations stated in Chapter 1. Any kind of broad generalizations cannot be made. The fact that the findings of this study con-

flict with those of Terman's and coincide with those of Norvell may be coincidental. A different set of findings might be elicited at another time, in a different setting, or with a different survey population of gifted children.

Some implications have sprung from this study and speculations about the findings may be important.

1. Intermediate school-aged gifted children have similar reading interests which require an educational program of quality with a philosophy upon which to base instruction. Since the children across the state of Missouri expressed the same interests, it would seem that a unified philosophy and approach to meeting the reading needs of the gifted could be planned.

2. The gifted children expressed a strong interest in reading, but a small percentage of the state-assisted gifted programs cited reading as a target area for instruction. With the gifted programs growing in the state of Missouri, it seems that some further regulations need to be designed to have a strong gifted reading program in the state.

3. Any school district, program coordinator, or teacher involved in or planning for gifted children's reading should be aware of the interest trends of boys and girls in grades four, five, and six. They should also be aware of gifted readers' attitudes about reading, their reading habits, and provide time for their recreational reading within a school day. These measures could secure the reading talents of many gifted students.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study and this sample population, with all the limitations in mind, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Gifted children in grades four, five, and six have a very positive attitude toward reading.

2. The sex of the reader is a major determiner of gifted middle grade children's interests, attitudes, and reading habits.

3. There seem to be more similarities than differences in reading interests among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students.

4. The most preferred topic of reading materials by gifted middle grade children is comedy.

5. Gifted children at the intermediate level love to read and feel there should be more time during the day to read.

6. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students have their own library of books at home and feel that reading is a good way to spend spare time.

7. Gifted children in the middle grades expand their interest through reading.

8. The most preferred topics of intermediate grade gifted children are comedy, mystery, adventure, myths and legends, stories about boys and girls their age, and science fiction.

9. The least preferred topics of intermediate grade

gifted children are poetry, food and cooking, music, social studies, and religion.

Recommendations

Most obviously, more studies are needed to reveal the reading interests of gifted children. A longitudinal study on a specific population could uncover a developmental trend gifted students may advance through. A study of this nature could be replicated in another state to ascertain the validity of this studies findings. Also, the same study population could be surveyed at another time of the year to determine the reliability of the expressed interests. Once a valid list of reading interests could be attained for middle grade gifted children, it could be compared to the curriculum to determine if instruction is meeting the needs of the children and be helpful in planning instruction.

Educators should relate instruction to the interests for maximal learning and then put forth a conscious effort to expand them to aid in the development of a well-rounded adult. Actual records of what books gifted children read should be kept because there are marked differences as to what gifted children read and what teachers and librarians recommend.

Finally, a study utilizing a control group of children with average I.Q.'s and gifted children could provide precious information as to the relationship between reading interests and intelligence.

Summary

As an advocate of educational programs for gifted children, the investigator hopes her findings will enlighten the area of reading instruction. Past research and present research are both alive within the pages of this study and it becomes the job of the reader to make important decisions upon the topics. As professional educators, it is our responsibility to read extensively and fashion a philosophy for ourselves. Only through critical thinking, questioning the findings of previous research, and fashioning new research can the education of the gifted be advanced and excelled to meet the needs of its population.

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APPENDIX A

School of Education & Psychology
417/836-5255

SMSU

Southwest Missouri State University

Springfield, Missouri 65802

March 3, 1981

Dear Colleague:

As you can see by the information enclosed, Ms. Renee C. Goostree and Ms. Teresa J. Martin are conducting studies into specific characteristics of gifted programs. I am aiding them in their studies and desire your help if possible.

According to S. M. S. U. policy, we may conduct survey research in the public and private schools of Missouri, as well as other types of research, without parental permission if the schools' administrators consider the research to be a part of the ongoing instruction or pertinent to the needs of the school. When the data that is being requested has been tabulated and analyzed, we will be very happy to send the results to you.

In no way will the name of any school, child, or other identifying data be contained in the theses for which the data are being collected. And, we intend that the results add to the present knowledge related to gifted programs.

We wish that all of the research volunteers, especially the students (and their parents if necessary), be reminded of their rights as research volunteers. Participation is strictly voluntary. Your return of the information will be taken as an indication of consent to participate in this study.

In order to safeguard the confidentiality of responses, returned data sheets shall be secured with access and processing under control and supervision of the investigators.

We have contacted Dr. Nell Sanders in the Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She requested that we obtain some of our information from the computer storage in Jefferson City, but did ask to see the results of the findings. We hope that you will also be able to help us.

Sincerely,

James R. Layton

James R. Layton, Ed. D.
Professor of Reading

office 417 836 5440
home 417 883 9346

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or concerns.

APPENDIX B

March 1981

Dear Gifted Class Teacher:

We are currently working on our theses on reading and gifted children at Southwest Missouri State University. It would be appreciated if you would take time out of your day to answer a survey and also allow your students to answer a survey.

Enclosed for the students are 15 Reading Interests Surveys. Please place them so that 4th, 5th and 6th grade gifted students may fill them out voluntarily.

Also enclosed you will find a Survey Questionnaire. Please mark the appropriate box for Instructors and fill it out with your own information.

When the surveys have been completed, please return them to the person in charge of the gifted program. We are hoping you can have these ready to return by March 18, 1981.

Thank you very much for your time,

Renee' C. Goostree

Renee' C. Goostree

Teresa J. Martin

Teresa J. Martin

APPENDIX C

READING INTEREST SURVEY

Dear Student:

Please fill out the survey to show how you feel and think about the subject of reading. I appreciate your help.

Age_____ Grade_____ Birthday_____ Boy or Girl (circle one)

I. READING ATTITUDES: This is a way to tell how you feel about reading. Read the sentences and put an X on the line under the letter that best tells how you feel.

	S.D. (Strongly Disagree)	D. (Disagree)	U. (Undecided)	A. (Agree)	S.A. (Strongly Agree)
1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.	___	___	___	___	___
2. Reading is easy.	___	___	___	___	___
3. I read alot.	___	___	___	___	___
4. I think reading is boring.	___	___	___	___	___
5. Reading is something I can do without.	___	___	___	___	___
6. There should be more time during the day to read.	___	___	___	___	___
7. I love to read.	___	___	___	___	___
8. I get tired when I read.	___	___	___	___	___
9. I have lots of my own books at home.	___	___	___	___	___
10. There are better things to do than read.	___	___	___	___	___
11. I seldom read except when I have an assignment.	___	___	___	___	___
12. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.	___	___	___	___	___
13. I like to share books with my friends.	___	___	___	___	___
14. Books make good presents.	___	___	___	___	___
15. I hate reading.	___	___	___	___	___
16. Very few books are interesting to read.	___	___	___	___	___
17. I like to expand my interests through reading.	___	___	___	___	___
18. It takes me a long time to read a book.	___	___	___	___	___
19. There is nothing to be gained by reading.	___	___	___	___	___
20. I sometimes become a character in a book I'm reading.	___	___	___	___	___

II. READING EXPERIENCES: Please circle or write in your answers.

1. Not counting school assignments, how many hours do you spend reading each week? 1 to 3 4 to 6 7 to 10 10 or more

2. Do you have a favorite author? yes or no
   If so, who?_____
   If you like an author, do you look for and read more of their books? yes or no

3. Have you read a book more than once? yes or no
   What books have you read more than twice? _____
   Why do you like some books well enough to read them several times? _____
   _____

4. Has a book ever changed your life by giving you new ideas or new goals or a new point of view? yes or no

5. Think of all the books you have read. Do you remember any that changed your thinking. yes or no
   Please write the title._____
   How did the book change your thinking?_____
   Have any books ever changed your actions as well as your thinking? yes or no
   Please write the title._____
   Explain how it has changed your actions._____

(Please turn paper over to back side)

III. READING INTERESTS CHECKLIST: Your feelings about reading can be shown by circling the number beside each item. For a reading subject you "dislike very much" circle the number 1. For a reading subject you "like very much" circle the number 5. If your likes are somewhere between, circle that number.

I like to read about...	dislike greatly	dislike	undecided	like	like very much
1. adventures	1	2	3	4	5
2. animals (acting like people)	1	2	3	4	5
3. applied science (engines, machines, space)	1	2	3	4	5
4. archaeology (exploring ancient times & cities)	1	2	3	4	5
5. art	1	2	3	4	5
6. biographies of men	1	2	3	4	5
7. biographies of women	1	2	3	4	5
8. boys/girls my age	1	2	3	4	5
9. comedy	1	2	3	4	5
10. crafts and hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
11. folklore	1	2	3	4	5
12. famous people	1	2	3	4	5
13. food and cooking	1	2	3	4	5
14. history	1	2	3	4	5
15. human body/ health	1	2	3	4	5
16. different languages	1	2	3	4	5
17. music	1	2	3	4	5
18. mysteries	1	2	3	4	5
19. myths and legends	1	2	3	4	5
20. nature study (insects, birds, animals)	1	2	3	4	5
21. poetry	1	2	3	4	5
22. prehistoric world	1	2	3	4	5
23. religions	1	2	3	4	5
24. romance/love	1	2	3	4	5
25. science	1	2	3	4	5
26. science fiction	1	2	3	4	5
27. sports	1	2	3	4	5
28. travel (other lands)	1	2	3	4	5
29. social studies (government, cultures)	1	2	3	4	5
30. Black studies	1	2	3	4	5
31. world problems (war, poverty, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

MAR 2 3 1981

APPENDIX D

School of Education & Psychology
417/836-5255

SMSU

Southwest Missouri State University Springfield, Missouri 65802

Dear Project Director -
This study was not approved by the Department. Your participation is voluntary, and I recommend that you decline.
Neil Sanders
3-23-81

March 3, 1981

Dear Colleague:

As you can see by the information enclosed, Ms. Renee C. Goostree and Ms. Teresa J. Martin are conducting studies into specific characteristics of gifted programs. I am aiding them in their studies and desire your help if possible.

According to S. M. S. U. policy, we may conduct survey research in the public and private schools of Missouri, as well as other types of research, without parental permission if the schools' administrators consider the research to be a part of the ongoing instruction or pertinent to the needs of the school. When the data that is being requested has been tabulated and analyzed, we will be very happy to send the results to you.

In no way will the name of any school, child, or other identifying data be contained in the theses for which the data are being collected. And, we intend that the results add to the present knowledge related to gifted programs.

We wish that all of the research volunteers, especially the students (and their parents if necessary), be reminded of their rights as research volunteers. Participation is strictly voluntary. Your return of the information will be taken as an indication of consent to participate in this study.

In order to safeguard the confidentiality of responses, returned data sheets shall be secured with access and processing under control and supervision of the investigators.

We have contacted Dr. Nell Sanders in the Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She requested that we obtain some of our information from the computer storage in Jefferson City, but did ask to see the results of the findings. We hope that you will also be able to help us.

I did not agree to furnish names addresses nor did we approve the collecting of data from school dis

Sincerely,

James R. Layton

James R. Layton, Ed. D.
Professor of Reading

office 417 836 5440 Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or concerns.

APPENDIX E

Map of Surveyed Gifted Programs

• State-assisted gifted programs

▾ Programs returning surveys

APPENDIX F

Statistical Package SPSS, V8

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GOOSTREE GIFTED READING INTEREST SURVEY 4 5 6 MAY 81
FIXED (1) /1 S4B 3-5,AGEGRUP 7-8,GRADLVL 10,SEXDIST 12,
LEARNIN 14,EASYTOO 15,READLOT 16,BORINTO 17,WITHOUT 18,
MORETIM 19,LOVETOO 20,TIREDEZ 21,OWNBOOK 22,XBETTER 23,
SELDOMR 24,SPARETI 25,SHAREBK 26,PRESENT 27,HATERED 28,
NOINTER 29,EXPANDI 30,LONGTIM 31,NOGAINR 32,CHARACT 33,
NOHOURS 35,AUTHORS 36,WHOREAD 37,READMOR 38,CHANGES 39,
THINKNG 40,ACTIONS 41,ADVENTU 43,ANIMALS 44,APSCIEN 45,
ARCHEOL 46,ARTISTI 47,BIOGRAM 48,BIOGRIF 49,OWNAGES 50,
COMEDDY 51,CRAFTHO 52,FOLKLOR 53,PEOPLEF 54,FOODCOO 55,
HISTORY 56,HUMANBO 57,LANGUAG 58,MUSICAL 59,MYSTERY 60,
MYTHSLE 61,NATURES 62,POETRYS 63,PREHIST 64,RELIGIO 65,
ROMANCE 66,SIENSRE 67,SCFICTI 68,SPORTSY 69,TRAVELS 70,
SOSTUDY 71,BLACKST 72,WPROBLM 73,SYSTEMS 79-80
CARD
CASES=10/VARIABLES=SUB TO SEXDIST,SYSTEMS
TABLES=LEARNIN TO WPROBLM BY AGEGRUP TO SEXDIST,SYSTEMS
1
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APPENDIX G

Mean Scores Obtained for the Attitude Section of the Survey

Questions	$\bar{X}$ for Boys	$\bar{X}$ for Girls	Level of Significance
1	4.3469	4.5241	
2	3.7007	3.7655	
3	4.0816	4.5034	.001
4	4.3197	4.5931	.01
5	4.3605	4.4828	
6	3.9592	4.1931	.04
7	4.1020	4.5103	.001
8	3.3197	3.3517	
9	4.4898	4.4621	
10	3.0340	3.4483	.001
11	4.2857	4.4552	
12	4.2177	4.4483	.02
13	3.5714	4.0669	.001
14	3.7415	4.0690	.001
15	4.4634	4.7793	.001
16	3.9592	4.1931	.04
17	3.9864	4.0759	
18	3.7415	3.9586	
19	4.6871	4.5724	
20	3.6122	3.9586	.001

APPENDIX H

Preferences in Reading Materials listed by Sex

Boys		Girls	
Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores	Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
comedy	4.3333		
science fiction	4.3333	mystery	4.4138
adventure	4.2245	boys/girls my age	4.3793
mystery	4.1769	comedy	4.2828
myths and legends	4.0612	adventure	4.0690
sports	4.0408	myths and legends	3.9862
		biographies of women	3.8138
boys/girls my age	3.6599	famous people	3.6483
prehistoric world	3.6190	animals	3.5862
famous people	3.6054	romance/love	3.5241
applied science	3.5578	travel	3.5241
science	3.4626	science fiction	3.4759
nature	3.3946	history	3.3724
animals	3.3946	crafts and hobbies	3.2759
history	3.3673	nature	3.2345
biographies of men	3.3061	biographies of men	3.1724
archaeology	3.2857	poetry	3.1586
crafts and hobbies	3.2449	different languages	3.1448
travel	3.1905	folklore	3.1310
folklore	3.1361	archaeology	3.0552
world problems	2.9116	sports	3.0552
biographies of women	2.8503	food and cooking	3.0483
different languages	2.7143	music	2.9517
human body/health	2.6190	Black studies	2.9448
art	2.5510	art	2.8897
Black studies	2.4898	human body/health	2.8207
social studies	2.4762	prehistoric world	2.8138
music	2.3061	social studies	2.7241
religions	2.2789	religions	2.6552
food and cooking	2.2653	world problems	2.6159
romance/love	2.2381	science	2.5448
poetry	2.2313	applied science	2.0483

APPENDIX I

Significant Differences between Boys and Girls in Interest Preferences

Topics	*t*-value	Level of Significance
applied science	10.80	.001
art	2.19	.02
biographies of women	6.83	.001
boys/girls my age	5.63	.001
food and cooking	5.35	.001
different languages	2.73	.001
music	4.26	.001
poetry	6.12	.001
prehistoric world	5.20	.001
religions	2.81	.001
romance/love	7.85	.001
science	5.88	.001
science fiction	5.72	.001
sports	6.29	.001
travel	2.34	.01
Black studies	3.22	.001

APPENDIX J

Reading Interest Preferences Ranked by the Survey Population

Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
comedy	4.3082
mysteries	4.2967
adventure	4.1373
myths and legends	4.0240
boys/girls my age	4.0171
science fiction	3.9075
famous people	3.6267
sports	3.5514
animals	3.4897
history	3.3699
travel	3.3562
biographies of women	3.3288
nature study	3.3151
crafts and hobbies	3.2603
biographies of men	3.2397
prehistoric world	3.2192
archaeology	3.1712
folklore	3.1336
science	3.0068
different languages	2.9281
romance/love	2.8767
applied science	2.8082
world problems	2.7945
art	2.7192
human body/health	2.7192
Black studies	2.7158
poetry	2.6918
food and cooking	2.6541
music	2.6267
social studies	2.5993
religions	2.4658

APPENDIX K

Reading Interest Preferences Ranked by the Fourth Grade Population

Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
mystery	4.5658
comedy	4.4605
adventure	4.3421
myths and legends	4.0658
science fiction	3.9737
animals	3.8816
famous people	3.8684
boys/girls my age	3.8158
sports	3.7368
nature	3.6447
history	3.5921
travel	3.5789
crafts and hobbies	3.5658
archaeology	3.5132
science	3.4474
prehistoric world	3.4079
biographies of women	3.3289
folklore	3.3158
art	3.1447
different languages	3.0921
biographies of men	3.0395
food and cooking	3.0000
human body/health	2.9474
poetry	2.9342
social studies	2.9211
romance/love	2.8684
applied science	2.8684
world problems	2.8158
Black studies	2.7895
music	2.7632
religions	2.6711

APPENDIX L

Reading Interest Preferences Ranked by the Fifth Grade Population

Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
mystery	4.3137
comedy	4.2549
myths and legends	4.1275
adventure	4.0490
boys/girls my age	4.0392
science fiction	3.8725
famous people	3.5392
animals	3.4216
nature	3.4118
prehistoric world	3.4118
history	3.3922
sports	3.3627
biographies of women	3.2843
travel	3.2627
biographies of men	3.2549
crafts and hobbies	3.2255
folklore	3.2157
archaeology	3.0784
different languages	2.9510
science	2.9118
romance/love	2.8137
applied science	2.7941
Black studies	2.7451
world problems	2.7059
human body/health	2.6961
food and cooking	2.6471
music	2.5882
art	2.5686
poetry	2.5490
social studies	2.5294
religions	2.2843

APPENDIX M

Reading Interest Preferences Ranked by the Sixth Grade Population

Topics	$\bar{X}$ scores
comedy	4.2589
boys/girls my age	4.1339
adventure	4.1071
mysteries	4.0982
myths and legends	3.8929
science fiction	3.8929
sports	3.6250
famous people	3.5625
biographies of women	3.3750
biographies of men	3.3661
travel	3.3036
animals	3.2857
history	3.1786
crafts and hobbies	3.0982
archaeology	3.0268
nature	2.9911
romance/love	2.9375
prehistoric world	2.9107
folklore	2.9107
world problems	2.8750
different languages	2.8036
applied science	2.7946
science	2.7857
poetry	2.6518
Black studies	2.6339
human body/health	2.5893
art	2.5625
music	2.5625
religions	2.4911
social studies	2.4286
food and cooking	2.4196